

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT.

In the Administrative County of West Suffolk.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, for 1904.

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board and of the West Suffolk County Council.)

Population 1891, 14456 ; 1901, 13121. Area, 49765 acres. Number of persons per acre, 0.27.

Number of Parishes 21. Number of inhabited houses, 13121. Number of persons per house, 4.1. Geological formation, chalk, covered on the higher ground with Boulder Clay, and in the valleys with drift sand and gravel or brick earth. Superficially with alluvium.

The following vital statistics have been compiled from the monthly returns sent to me from the different Registrars in the District :—

1. THE BIRTHS. The number of births registered during the year was 271 equivalent to a birth-rate of 20.6 per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this district during the previous seven years were :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Births	315	344	347	286	315	288	278	271
Birth-rate	21.8	23.7	24.0	19.7	23.8	21.8	21.2	20.6

These figures show that the great decline in the birth-rate still continues. About ten years ago the average was always 27 or 28 per 1000.

The Birth Rate for 1904 in Rural England and Wales, was 26.8

THE DEATHS. The number of deaths from all causes registered during the year was 176, to which have to be added the deaths of 21 persons in the Workhouse and St. Leonard's Hospital, Sudbury, belonging to the district ; also to deduct the deaths of 8 persons in the Sanatorium at Nayland, not belonging to the District, thus making the nett deaths 189, equivalent to a death-rate of 14.4 per 1000. The records for the previous seven years were as follows :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
Deaths registered	160	209	277	205	186	190	161	176
Deaths belonging to the District	174	229	246	221	200	206	174	189
Death rate	12.0	15.1	17.0	15.2	14.1	15.7	13.2	14.4

The Death Rate for 1904 in Rural England and Wales, was 15.3

Chiefly owing to the absence of fatal zymotic diseases the death-rate has been lower than the average of the past seven years. The following table shows the relative age mortality during the year :—

Deaths Under 1 year. 29	1 " 5 years. 6	5 " 15 years. 9	15 " 25 years. 10	25 " 65 years. 42	over " 65 years. 93			
						1897.	1898.	1899.
						1900.	1901.	1902.
						1903.	1904.	
Deaths of children under one year						35	49	40
Rate per 1000 of births registered						111.1	142.3	115.2

The Infant Mortality for 1904 in Rural England and Wales was 125.0

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases. These only numbered 4 during the year and were from Scarlet Fever 2, Whooping Cough 2.

For the previous seven years the zymotic death rate was as follows :—

1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
0.10	1.05	1.05	1.31	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.3

The Zymotic Death Rate for 1904 in Rural England and Wales, was 1.28

Deaths from other Causes. During the year there were deaths from Phthisis 14, other pulmonary diseases 19, from cancer 21, Heart Diseases 19, premature births 6, accidents 7, and suicides 3.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION. The total number of cases notified in the district during the year was 165 or 12.5 per 1000 of the population. The notifications for the past seven years were as follows :—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria and Croup.	Typhoid Fever	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Total cases.	Per thousand population.
1897	0	50	7	2	4	16	79	5.4
1898	0	30	8	2	2	14	56	3.8
1899	0	53	7	1 simple	3	19	83	5.7
1900	0	7	8	2	1	15	33	2.2
1901	0	15	13	5 1 (cont.)	0	10	43	3.2
1902	0	16	5	1	1	8 chkn pox	233	2.5
1903	0	24	6	0 2 (cont.)	0	9	41	3.1
1904	0	149	7	0	0	9	165	12.5

The following are particulars of the occurrence of these diseases and other zymotics not notifiable :—

Scarlet Fever. This disease was very prevalent during the year, and affected more or less ten parishes. 149 cases occurred in 91 families ; only 7 of these were adults. The character of the epidemic was of a remarkably mild type ; in many instances the children affected were never ill, and continued to attend school without missing a day, or exciting any suspicion, and were only discovered on investigating the sources of infection in notified cases. The parish of Long Melford suffered most, there being 114 cases up to the end of the year. The disease began early in April with a sudden outbreak of eleven cases in seven families, all being children attending school. Search was made in the schools, and one girl was discovered freely desquamating, and there were probably others, as both schools, at different parts of the parish, had children affected. I advised the closing of the schools for a fortnight for cleansing and disinfecting purposes, which was done. There being no means of isolating these early cases, and the children never being really ill, contacts occurred and cases kept appearing all the summer. During the school recess it abated, and there were no notifications for three weeks, but after a school treat it again broke out, and I advised the school not to be re-opened for a fortnight, but without having much effect on the continuance of the complaint. On Nov. 14th the schools were closed again until after Christmas. Towards the close of the year the disease had decidedly abated.

The necessity of having an Isolation Hospital for this large parish was much realised, and I think that some steps will now be taken to provide one.

In the parish of Stanstead 14 cases of Scarlet Fever were notified in December in 4 families. I found some of these children had been attending school before it was discovered that they were infectious. Fearing a further spread, the school was closed on 12th December until after the Christmas holidays.

The other parishes affected had very few cases, and the families could be easily isolated.

Disinfectants and carbolic oil were supplied, and in due course all the houses were disinfected.

Diphtheria and Croup. Six cases of Diphtheria occurred; one a child in the parish of Great Waldingfield, origin unknown, and five in the parish of Shimpling in three families. There was evidence that this disease originated from contact with cases in an adjoining parish outside the district. Antitoxin was supplied and all recovered.

One case of Croup of a slight membranous character was notified in Cavendish parish.

Whooping Cough. A very general outbreak of this disease occurred during the spring in the parish of Acton, and affected the school to such an extent that it was considered necessary to close it for a month. Two young infants died from attacks.

Chicken Pox. This disease was prevalent in the parish of Gt. Cornard during the summer, so much so that it was advisable to close the school from the 6th June for three weeks. It also prevailed among the infant classes in Nayland School.

WATER SUPPLY. The rainfall during the year was 18.31 inches, very much lower than 1903, which was 31½ inches; still the well supply was fairly maintained. Seven new wells were sunk—all private—one in Stoke by-Nayland for three cottages and six for new houses erected; for the latter certificates were granted, after analysis of the water had proved satisfactory.

The water from seven wells was found to be impure on analysis; six of these were cleaned out and surface leakage prevented, and the water became fit for use; the other requires a new well to be sunk.

Twenty-one analysis of water were made, 14 of which were found to be pure and 7 impure.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE. In the parish of Nayland 50 yards of new sewers were relaid, and in Long Melford 40 yards were extended from existing sewer, and also two old sewers repaired; also three ditches which conveyed sewage were cleaned out. A similar ditch in Cavendish was cleared of weeds, etc. Sixteen new privies were erected and 48 repaired.

HOUSES. Eleven new houses were erected and inspected. Three cases of overcrowding were abated. Two houses in a filthy condition were put into wholesome and tenantable state. There were 83 houses disinfected, chiefly after scarlet fever.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL. The experience of the zymotic outbreaks this year show the necessity of having some place to isolate the early cases. The project of establishing a central Isolation Hospital for the combined Districts forming the Sudbury Union, meets with much opposition from the outlying parishes; therefore the alternative of having two or more smaller hospitals in each of the most populous areas in the district is under consideration. Farm houses or cottages might be available, if in suitable sites.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS. No complaints have been received from H.M. Inspector during the year.

Workshops and bakehouses to the number of 57 have been inspected. Only in one case was there sanitary defects found, which were remedied. Twenty-six home-workers premises were visited. Sixteen slaughter houses and 35 dairies and cowsheds were inspected and found satisfactory.

GENERAL SANITATION. Systematic inspections have been made in each parish during the year, as well as special inspections when required.

No legal proceedings were necessary this year.

Annexed is a tabular statement, relative to the sanitary work done in the 21 parishes in the District.

Tabular statements, according to the forms supplied by the Local Government Board, of sickness and mortality within the districts are appended to the official reports, also a tabular statement according to the form required by the West Suffolk County Council.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1904.

	Acton	Alpheton	Assington	Boxted	Bures St. Mary	Cavendish	Chilton	Great Cornard	Little Cornard	Hartest	Hawkedon	Lawshall	Leavenheath	Melford	Nayland with Wissington	Newton	Shimpling	Somerton	Stanstead	Stoke-by-Nayland	Great Waldingfield	Little Waldingfield	TOTAL.
Complaints Received	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	2	1	1	...	1	2	...	2	...	...	1	...	...	13
Nuisances Detected	3	...	2	...	17	3	1	14	10	5	4	7	3	16	19	5	12	5	1	25	3	11	166
Nuisances Abated after Notice served	1	...	...	...	10	2	1	1	5	2	2	1	1	3	9	5	7	...	...	16	1	4	71
Nuisances Abated without Notice	2	...	2	...	7	1	...	13	5	3	2	4	2	13	10	...	5	5	1	9	2	7	93
Slaughter Houses Inspected	...	...	1	...	2	3	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	16
Bakehouses Inspected	1	...	1	...	3	4	...	1	...	4	...	...	...	7	3	1	...	...	...	1	...	1	27
Dairies and Cowsheds Inspected	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	...	1	...	6	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	35
Houses Newly Erected	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	5	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Houses Disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	1	...	...	7	2	1	3	...	1	...	1	1	83
Houses Reported Unfit for Habitation	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Houses Closed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Houses Pulled Down	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
Filthy Houses Cleansed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	2
Premises Repaired	...	...	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	9
Premises overcrowded Abated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	3
Wells (New)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1
Wells (Cleaned out, Deepened, &c.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	6
Samples of Water taken	1	...	2	...	3	...	...	7	...	2	...	1	...	2	...	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	21
Privies (New)	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	1	...	6	...	1	16
Privies (Repaired)	...	...	2	...	2	1	...	4	8	...	4	3	1	...	4	5	1	2	...	5	2	4	48
Manure Pits, Urinals (New)	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	2
Sewers (Relaid, repaired, &c.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Sink Pipes disconnected	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Drains (New)	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	...	1	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	10
Drains (Improved)	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	1	...	...	...	6	6	...	2	...	1	6	...	1	27
Ditches cleaned out	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Animals improperly kept removed	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	4
Offensive Accumulations removed	2	...	...	...	5	...	...	2	...	1	...	1	2	3	...	...	3	...	1	...	3	...	23
Workshops Inspected	1	1	1	...	3	1	...	1	...	1	...	2	...	11	4	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	28
Workshops Nuisances abated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Outworkers Visited	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	14	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26

FRANK HIGGINSON,
Inspector of Nuisances.

